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Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General*

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, on 6 March 2001, adopted resolution 55/218, in which the Assembly, inter alia, took note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU); welcomed the participation in and constructive contribution of OAU to the work of the United Nations and its organs and specialized agencies; called for further enhancement of the role of OAU in all United Nations activities concerning Africa; requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to implement the recommendations of the biennium meeting of the two organizations held in Addis Ababa on 10 and 11 April 2000; and particularly appealed to the United Nations to intensify its assistance to OAU in strengthening the institutional and operational capacity of its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

2. In the year under review, the United Nations and its specialized agencies have continued to implement and expand in scope and depth the agreed programme of cooperation with OAU. It must be noted that the programme of cooperation between the United Nations and OAU so far constitutes one of the most extensive, compared with organizations in other regions of the world, perhaps as a result of the challenge to international peace and security posed by conflict situations in Africa (the majority of issues under consideration by the Security Council are related to conflicts in Africa). The first and presently the only United Nations liaison office with a regional organization is the United Nations Liaison Office with the Organization of African Unity, based in Addis Ababa.

3. One of the most important developments in the year under review that may affect the structure and content of the programme of cooperation between the United Nations and OAU is the coming into force of the Constitutive Act of the African Union on 26 May 2001, upon ratification by two thirds of the member States of OAU. Currently, 51 out of 53 member States have ratified the Constitutive Act. The Organization of African Unity is to be phased out within a period of one year, with the possibility of an extension of the period of transition. Proposals are to be evolved on the orientation and structure of the new African Union for the consideration of the member States. This situation poses a number of questions for the programme of action that was agreed upon between the United Nations and OAU in April 2000, especially those aspects that call for support by the international community for the development of the institutional capacity of OAU in various areas, especially in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

4. This transformation is also taking place in the context of a leadership change in OAU, as Amara Essy replaced Salim Ahmed Salim as Secretary-General on 20 September 2001, upon the conclusion by the latter of his term of office. The United Nations intends to undertake, with the new Secretary-General of OAU a review of the United Nations/OAU programme of cooperation, to determine how this programme can be adapted to support OAU as it develops the structural concept of the new African Union and as it seeks to establish the new institutions that this may call for. Pending this review, the following analysis constitutes the evaluation of the status of cooperation between the two organizations in the year under review.

II. Cooperation in the area of conflict prevention, peace and security

5. The United Nations and OAU continued to expand their collaboration in the area of peace and security during the period under review. In this regard, the United Nations Liaison Office with the Organization of African Unity remains a useful and important instrument in facilitating communication and consultation with OAU and in the operations of peace missions in the African region. The Liaison Office worked closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in facilitating collaboration with OAU and the civilian and military officials of the Government of Ethiopia towards the setting up of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). The Liaison Office facilitated the signing of the status of forces agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Ethiopia and also helped in the harmonization of relations between the OAU secretariat and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Liaison Office also remains important in the facilitation of the operations of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), especially through the work of the MONUC Military Liaison Office with OAU.

6. In the period under review, the Liaison Office facilitated collaboration by United Nations departments and programmes with OAU; these included the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The role of the Liaison Office has been of particular importance in preparing for a symposium on natural disaster that is scheduled to be held towards the end of 2001, and is working with UNDP to prepare the documents to be submitted to the symposium.

7. The Liaison Office continues to follow the deliberations of OAU organs and to facilitate the regular flow of reports and information from OAU to the United Nations Secretariat, especially on the activities of the OAU Central Organ, and from the United Nations to OAU on the activities of the United Nations, especially in the area of peace and security.

A. Department of Political Affairs

8. The cooperation between the United Nations and OAU is predicated on their shared commitment to strengthen partnership in the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations continued to consult closely with OAU in the prevention and management of many of the conflicts in the African region in the year under review. Of particular significance were the close consultations between the two organizations in managing the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, from the last three months of 2000 to the first trimester of 2001. Pursuant to the ruling made at the OAU Summit held in Algiers in July 1999 barring regimes that come to power through unconstitutional means from participating at OAU meetings, the delegates of Côte d'Ivoire and the Comoros were not allowed to participate in the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU at its thirty-sixth ordinary session, held in Lomé in July 2000.

9. The Secretary-General sent political missions to Côte d'Ivoire in an effort to prevent the escalation of the political crisis in that country and appointed Lakhdar Brahimi as his Special Envoy to try to mediate between the Ivorian parties and prevent a repeat of the conflict that erupted in the wake of the Presidential election in 2000, which led to the killing of about 60 people. Following the Special Envoy's mission, President Eyadéma, in his capacity as Chairman of OAU, invited President Gbagbo and Mr. Ouattara to meet in Lomé in March 2001, in an effort to defuse tensions.

10. The United Nations and OAU continued their close cooperation aimed at seeking a political settlement to the conflict in Burundi. This cooperation started with the establishment of the United Nations political presence in that country in 1993. The two organizations have been closely coordinating initiatives and action through their special representatives and envoys. The OAU Special Envoy to Burundi has regularly participated in meetings of special envoys and representatives for Burundi organized by the Department of Political Affairs since 1999.

11. The United Nations and OAU have also worked in close cooperation to solve the crisis in the Comoros. The OAU mediation efforts led to the signing, on 17 February 2001, of a new Framework Agreement for Reconciliation in the Comoros, in Fomboni, under the auspices of OAU and the International Organization of La Francophonie. The Secretary-General, in his statement of 27 April 2001, commended OAU and its partners for the important role they played in facilitating the signing of the agreement and their efforts in ensuring its implementation. The United Nations and OAU are currently playing a significant role in supporting the parties in the various implementation mechanisms provided for in the Agreement.

12. The Secretary-General convened the Fourth High-Level Meeting between the United Nations and Heads of Regional Organizations on 6 and 7 February 2001, the main theme of which was "Cooperation for peace-building". The meeting was attended by OAU and two subregional organizations from Africa: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The meeting resulted in the adoption of a "Framework for cooperation in peace-building", which identifies possible future cooperative activities between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as establishing peace-building units, sending joint assessment missions to the field, developing repertories of best practices and lessons learned and the joint holding of pledging conferences. The Security Council welcomed the results of the meeting in its presidential statement dated 20 February 2001 (S/PRST/2001/5).

13. It was agreed that a working-level follow-up meeting between the United Nations and regional

organizations would be held in New York by the end of 2001. The meeting will attempt to develop practical means of implementing the Framework for Cooperation in Peace-building and to further develop the 13 modalities for conflict prevention adopted in 1998 by the Third High-Level Meeting between the United Nations and Heads of Regional Organizations.

14. It was also agreed that regional workshops hosted by interested regional organizations (including those from Africa), could be held during 2002, to discuss specific regional dimensions of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in conflict-prevention and peace-building.

Electoral assistance

15. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/218 on the cooperation between the United Nations and OAU, and following the previous report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/55/498), the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs has maintained consultation with OAU on matters related to election monitoring and observation, as well as the democratization process in general. A representative of the Electoral Assistance Division met with a delegation of the OAU Division for Political Cooperation in Addis Ababa from 18 to 25 January 2001, and discussed ways to improve and strengthen the cooperation between the two organizations on electoral issues.

16. The representatives agreed to strengthen cooperation in the area of technical assistance to Member States and to exchange names of experts, reports, and other relevant information in this field. The second area discussed was cooperation in the coordination of international observers; it was recommended that the United Nations could assist OAU observers in the area of training, logistics and deployment.

B. Department of Peacekeeping Operations

17. The establishment of mechanisms for early warning and conflict management by OAU and African subregional organizations, particularly ECOWAS, SADC and other organizations, has helped to strengthen their contribution to peacekeeping operations and has enhanced closer cooperation with those organizations as essential partners of the United Nations in peace support activities, both within the African region and in other parts of the world.

18. Accordingly, cooperation between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and OAU has been growing in various aspects of peacekeeping activities. This cooperation includes coordination of efforts in peacekeeping operations where both the United Nations and OAU are involved and in activities aimed at enhancing African peacekeeping capacity.

19. Cooperation in peacekeeping activities in Africa is also aimed at enhancing the collective institutional capacity of African States, including in such areas as information exchange and peacekeeping training, as well as promoting greater African participation in the United Nations Standby Arrangement System.

20. Within the framework of its staff exchange programme with OAU, the Department arranged an orientation/training programme in New York for the Head of the OAU Situation Room at the beginning of 2001. Consultations were also conducted at OAU headquarters on further cooperation, including a follow-up technical assistance to strengthen the OAU Situation Room as part of the effort to enhance the organization's early warning capacity.

21. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUC and OAU cooperate in the framework of the structures and mechanisms established for the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and relevant resolutions of the Security Council. In particular, MONUC has provided extensive logistical assistance (including transport) to the OAU observers stationed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The visit of the OAU Secretary-General to the Mission and the exchange of views with MONUC officials have reinforced the mutual commitment to continue to closely work with one another. The United Nations is also assisting the work of the OAU-appointed Facilitator of the Inter-Congolese dialogue, by providing staff positions in his office, as well as logistical assistance, to ensure the successful conduct of the dialogue.

22. With regard to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), regular consultations are held between OAU, ECOWAS and the United Nations on the peace process. Demonstrating OAU's commitment to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Sierra Leone, the OAU Secretary-General visited Sierra Leone in August 2000 to assess the peace

process and expressed the regional organization's strong support for UNAMSIL. The OAU Secretary-General and representatives of the organization participated in several key meetings on Sierra Leone. These included the second meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee, held in Freetown on 24 January 2001, the summit of ECOWAS Committee on Sierra Leone, held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 9 May 2001, meetings of the United Nations-ECOWAS-Government of Sierra Leone Coordination Mechanism in Abuja on 10, 11 and 30 April 2001, respectively, as well as the ECOWAS-United Nations-Government of Sierra Leone-Revolutionary United Front review meeting on the implementation of the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement, held in Abuja on 2 May 2001. In addition to the above, the Secretary-General of OAU and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations consult each other on a regular basis, including through the Special Envoy of OAU to Sierra Leone.

23. Very close relations with OAU have continued in UNMEE for the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2000/601). In accordance with the Agreement, the United Nations and OAU have established a Military Coordination Commission to coordinate and resolve military issues arising during the implementation process, in order to facilitate the functions of the Mission, as well as coordinate their political action towards the settlement, including at the level of the Secretaries-General. UNMEE is also providing logistical support to the military liaison officers deployed by OAU in the mission area, in order to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire agreement between the two parties. UNMEE also cooperates with OAU on the promotion of various confidence-building measures aimed at resolving the dispute between the two countries.

24. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) continues to cooperate with the OAU observers in fulfilling their duties and to apprise them of the evolving nature of the Mission.

25. While the OAU and African States, as well as some African subregional organizations, have shown growing interest in playing an increasing role in African peacekeeping, their resource capacity continues to present a major constraint. In view of this, the Secretariat has continued its effort to facilitate contacts between African troop contributors to United Nations operations and donor States, which could provide support in making up for the shortfalls in the contingent-owned equipment and self-sustainment. The United Nations is also considering various options in order to enhance its strategic reserve and to assist in addressing the problem of logistical support. At the same time, the Secretary-General has continued to urge non-African Member States to contribute troops adequately prepared and equipped for peacekeeping operations in Africa.

26. The Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has strengthened partnerships with many mine-affected African countries, with the aim of establishing and enhancing mine-action programmes and projects in affected areas. These activities, carried out in close collaboration with agencies within the Organization and other like-minded entities, continue to be a crucial element, not only in support of peacekeeping operations, but also in addressing humanitarian emergencies and long-term development concerns. Such programmes, conducted at various levels, include those in Chad, in the temporary security zone between Eritrea and Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia and the Sudan. Contingency planning is ongoing for mine action within Western Sahara and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

27. The international community can support these efforts, which are also aimed at building the institutional capacity of the region, including through contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Improving the Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa, and to the OAU Peace Fund, in particular, for its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

28. At the same time, it is clear that efforts aimed at enhancing the capacity of African countries in various aspects of peacekeeping remain complimentary to the obligations of all United Nations Member States under the Charter of the United Nations with regard to their contribution in maintaining peace and security in Africa, and are not intended to replace or reduce engagement of non-African countries in peacekeeping operations on the continent. It is hoped that the soon-to-be established African Union, which has made addressing conflicts in Africa its major concern, will enhance this cooperation between the two organizations in furtherance of peace in the region.

III. Cooperation on humanitarian issues

A. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

29. In 1999, the Secretary-General of OAU and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat agreed to hold a regional symposium on natural disaster management issues. The aim was to strengthen African countries' capacity to respond to natural disasters. The meeting was initially to take place in June 2000, but had to be postponed. Following discussions in Addis Ababa in June 2001 between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and OAU, it was agreed that a technical meeting would be held at the subregional level, as a start. Preliminary contact has been initiated by OAU with the SADC secretariat to hold a seminar towards the end of 2001, possibly in Maputo. Together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the Office is committed to co-organizing the seminar with OAU and providing support to strengthen the natural disaster response capacity on the African continent.

30. In addition, the Office of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Drought in the Horn of Africa has established regular contact with the Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons Division of OAU to share information on the evolution of the drought situation in the Horn and to explore their role in the establishment of a regional database coordination system. This will be further developed during 2002.

B. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

31. Following the Special Meeting of Governmental and Non-Governmental Technical Experts organized by OAU and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Conakry in March 2000, OAU and UNHCR have established a working group on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Implementation Plan adopted by the special meeting and endorsed by the OAU Council of Ministers at its seventy-second Ordinary Session, held at Lomé in July 2000. The major objective of those recommendations is to improve the institution of "asylum" on the African continent. In addition, UNHCR has established a task force, based in Geneva, to ensure appropriate follow-up action. UNHCR has also sought actively to involve African Governments in the ongoing Global Consultations on International Protection.

32. Other developments linked to the Comprehensive Implementation Plan have included the Regional Judges Round Table, held in Addis Ababa in November 2000. The involvement of the judiciary is critical in helping to assure respect for the rights of refugees within their countries of asylum. Similar meetings are planned for the various subregions in Africa. During the reporting period, OAU and UNHCR jointly published a Compendium of OAU Instruments and Texts on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Africa (1963-1999).

33. The Secretary-General of OAU and the High Commissioner for Refugees signed a revised OAU/UNHCR cooperation agreement on 9 April 2001, which emphasizes the need to address the underlying causes of refugee problems by the competent political organs within OAU. This message was reiterated by the Secretary-General of OAU at the seventy-fourth Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, held in Lusaka in July 2001.

34. At the thirty-seventh Lusaka Summit, the OAU Heads of State and Government adopted a decision on the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (AHG/Dec.165 (XXXVII)), in which they reaffirmed their commitment to the international protection regime for refugees. The OAU Council of Ministers also adopted a decision on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons (CM/Dec.598 (LXXIV)), which called for the promotion of voluntary repatriation in line with international legal instruments. The Ministers appealed to member States to address the security situation of refugees and aid workers and mentioned the possibility of the establishment of safe havens to facilitate the return of refugees to their countries of origin.

35. At the twenty-sixth Ordinary Session of the OAU Coordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection to Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, held in Addis Ababa from 17 to 21 May 2001, important decisions were taken on how the Committee could play

a more proactive role with respect to prevention, funding, refugee policy formulation and advocacy.

36. The OAU, UNHCR and other United Nations agencies joined in planning and conducting the Pan-African Forum on the Future of Children, held in Cairo in May 2001, in preparation for the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on children that was planned for September 2001. The Forum identified pertinent issues affecting refugee children, such as their illegal recruitment into armed forces, the denial of their rights as children and the central role of the family, and adopted a Declaration and Plan of Action.

IV. Cooperation in public information

37. In the lead-up to the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, held from 25 to 27 June 2001, the Public Affairs Division of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat publicized the African Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases, organized by OAU in Abuja, Nigeria, from 24 to 27 April 2001; it produced a press kit in English and French focusing on the call to action on HIV/AIDS made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Department and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) also cooperated with OAU information staff in contacting journalists to cover the Summit and in providing them with press materials.

38. A highlight of this period was the extensive coverage by the Department's Radio and Television Service of the Summit. The audio reports of the Service were included in the daily live broadcasts, and the live transmission feeds of the Summit debates were disseminated from 25 to 26 April to a total of 55 radio stations in Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East. Some 11 radio stations and networks in Africa, North America and Europe, including the BBC in London, carried the live feed of a press conference by Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 27 April 2001.

39. In the areas of peace and security and peacekeeping operations, United Nations Radio continued to cover all activities concerning cooperation in conflict prevention and resolution in Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as various activities of UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone.

40. The June 2001 double issue of the Department's *Africa Recovery* magazine gave full coverage to the African Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases and to the Abuja Declaration adopted by it. The issue also included a lengthy analysis of two political initiatives developed by some African leaders: the Millennium Partnership for the Africa Recovery Programme and the Omega Plan. The September 2001 issue of the magazine presented an understanding of what the New African Initiative, which unifies the two above-mentioned proposals, will mean for the continent. The New African Initiative was adopted at the thirty-seventh OAU Summit, held in Lusaka in July 2001. The decision taken by OAU at that session to transform itself into the African Union, and the plans for the new African Union were also featured in the September issue. Another publication, the *UN Chronicle*, carried articles in every issue during the reporting period on matters of relevance to OAU, including HIV/AIDS, peace and security in Africa, disaster management and development. The 1998 volume of the *Yearbook of the United Nations*, published in April 2001, contained coverage of that year's report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and OAU (A/53/419) and the full text of General Assembly resolution 53/91, of 7 December 1998, on the subject. The 1999 volume, currently under preparation, will also cover the report of the Secretary-General, as well as action taken by the Assembly.

41. The worldwide network of United Nations information centres, services and offices actively contributed to promoting and highlighting the cooperation between the United Nations and OAU. On the occasion of the OAU Summit on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations information centres in Asuncion, Buenos Aires and New Delhi ensured wide publication in the local press of the Op-Ed article written by the Secretary-General of OAU entitled "Mobilizing the world against HIV/AIDS". The information centre in Lagos worked with the OAU Summit Organizing Committee to ensure a successful press conference by the Secretary-General of the United Nations during the week-long Summit; it arranged for coverage of Secretary-General Annan's speech by United Nations Radio as well as by local and international journalists;

and distributed publications, press kits and other information material on HIV/AIDS.

42. In collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the information centre in Lomé provided assistance in the preparations for the OAU Ministry Conference on Food Security and Trade, including organization of a briefing for journalists. In May 2001, the information centre in Cairo arranged for media coverage of the Pan-African Forum on the Future of Children, jointly organized by OAU and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

43. Among the numerous youth outreach activities initiated by United Nations information centres to celebrate the Day of the African Child, the information centre in Accra organized, in cooperation with a coalition of non-governmental organizations, a mock OAU summit for children. The centre prepared all the statements on issues such as health care, child soldiers and child labour to be read by the "delegates", and briefed the media on the event. The centre in Nairobi organized a lecture about the United Nations, which, among other issues, addressed the question of the relationship between the United Nations and international organizations such as OAU. Participants included 2,000 students from 56 schools.

44. In July 2001, the information centre in Lusaka provided logistical assistance in the organization of the OAU Summit held in that city and distributed press releases and other information material about the meeting, while the centres in Cairo and Sana'a translated and broadly disseminated to the media Secretary- General Annan's statement to the Summit.

45. The Department's Information Centres Service highlighted a consensus resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Rights on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, in which the Commission noted, among other things, the programme for Africa of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the objective of strengthening cooperation between the Office and OAU with a view to regularly reviewing the needs in the area of human rights in the various subregions.

V. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

46. Within the framework of the cooperation agreement signed by OAU and UNESCO in July 1967, calling for regular consultations between the two organizations, the seventh joint UNESCO/OAU commission meeting was held in October 2000. That consultation was aimed at reviewing cooperation and defining a common strategy to better meet the needs of the continent to reinforce regional cooperation and integration in Africa. In this regard, UNESCO held, during the same period and in association with OAU, joint commission meetings with ECOWAS and SADC and signed a cooperation agreement with the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, the seven-State membership of which includes five African countries (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe).

HIV/AIDS

47. UNESCO participated in the African Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases, held in April 2001, and the Abuja Declaration stressed the importance of HIV/AIDS preventive education, as proposed by UNESCO. At the subregional level, in March 2001, UNESCO convened a regional meeting, entitled "The Elmina Conference on HIV/AIDS and Education: a call for action" in Elmina, Ghana, with the participation of senior Government experts from 13 ECOWAS nations and eastern and southern Africa. The conference identified three strategic actions for education sectors in ECOWAS countries, as follows:

(a) Preventing and controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS, especially among young people and educators;

(b) Reducing the traumatic impact of HIV/AIDS on learners, educators and education itself;

(c) Improving African management capacity and procedures to ensure that effective action can be taken to respond to this crisis.

48. At the national level, in 2001, UNESCO organized a working meeting in Côte d'Ivoire on HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. It adopted a strategy for HIV/AIDS preventive education to

promote health and prevent disease by providing the knowledge, attitudes, skills and the means to foster and sustain behaviour that reduces risk, improves care and lessens the impact of the illness. UNESCO also developed a cultural approach in the fight against HIV/AIDS during the Nairobi International Conference, held in October 2000, which was organized in cooperation with the African Itinerant College of Culture and Development and the Kenya Commission for UNESCO. The conference, which was held within the framework of the UNESCO/UNAIDS joint project "A cultural approach to HIV/AIDS prevention and care" was aimed at reviewing the situation and the promotion of the project theme. In line with the joint UNESCO/OAU commission's recommendations, the following areas are highlighted:

Education

49. Through its Regional Office on Education in Dakar (BREDA), UNESCO made considerable progress in mobilizing the sub-Saharan countries into implementing the Dakar Framework for Action. One of the highest priorities of UNESCO is to mobilize and coordinate support for the national action plans, which, according to the Dakar Framework for Action, must be ready by 2002. In the light of the information collected about the status of preparation of such national plans, UNESCO and its partners, including OAU, are providing technical assistance to countries in need.

50. UNESCO has also started preparations for the eighth conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States, to be held in Mauritius from 2 to 6 December 2002. As one of the key partners of UNESCO in this meeting, OAU has been invited to play a leading role in the organization of the conference.

51. In the area of science in the service of development, in line with the common recommendation by UNESCO and OAU, UNESCO organized conferences and meetings, as well as training courses and workshops, in several African countries, aimed at promoting the advancement, transfer and sharing of scientific knowledge and the strengthening of human resources in Africa. The following fellowships, travel and research grants were awarded to young researchers in science: UNESCO Chair in Tropical Medicine in Mozambique; UNESCO Chairs in the field of science: UNESCO Chair in Post Harvest Technology, in the Gambia; UNESCO Chair in Life Sciences, in South Africa; UNESCO/United Nations University Chair on the Concept and Practice of Zero Emissions in Africa, in Namibia; and UNESCO Chair in Post Harvest Technology, in Uganda. In the field of hydrology, an international seminar will be organized in Tripoli from 20 to 22 January 2002, in order to assess the status of African Transboundary Aquifer Systems and to support cooperation among African States on the issue.

Culture

52. OAU and UNESCO cooperate closely within the framework of the inter-cultural project, entitled "Slave route". UNESCO organized a preparatory round table for the International Conference on Intercultural Dialogue in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region in Libreville from 11 to 17 September 2001, with the participation of associate experts from Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe. Moreover, a panel on the theme "Slave route: slavery and racism" was convened during the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001.

53. As a follow-up to the establishment of the International Network of Observatories in Cultural Policies in Hanover in September 2000, UNESCO, in cooperation with OAU and with the support of the Ford Foundation, is preparing the establishment of an African regional observatory of cultural policies. After two preparatory encounters, held in Kinshasa (August 2000) and in Pretoria (January 2001), a meeting to launch the project was held in Cape Town, South Africa in May 2001. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a 10-step work plan, and an activity schedule, in which UNESCO was requested to play a leading role, in order to facilitate the process, was also established.

VI. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

54. During the period under review, cooperation between the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and OAU continued in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed between the two organizations in May 1999.

55. In 2000, UNCTAD participated in the preparatory committee for the organization of the fifth Afro-Arab Trade Fair planned for October 2001 in Tripoli, Lebanon. The UNCTAD secretariat will be associated in the setting up of an UNCTAD stand at the Fair and in organizing a cooperation forum for the expansion of trade, investment and economic cooperation between the two groups of countries.

56. At the invitation of OAU, UNCTAD prepared a paper on World Trade Organization issues of interest to African countries and made a presentation at the third session of the Trade Ministers meeting which was held in September 2000. UNCTAD has been invited to follow up on this work and to prepare a paper for the next Trade Ministers meeting, to be held in Nigeria in 2001.

57. While UNCTAD provided substantive support to the OAU/Africa Economic Community (AEC) Third Trade Ministers Conference held in Cairo in September, OAU was invited to a workshop on the management of capital flow: comparative experiences and implications for Africa, organized by UNCTAD in Cairo from 20 to 21 March 2001.

58. UNCTAD collaborated with OAU and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for the substantive preparations of the High-Level Brainstorming Meeting of African Trade Negotiators Preparatory to the Fourth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, held in Addis Ababa from 26 to 29 June 2001.

VII. Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations

59. The World Food Programme (WFP) and OAU signed their cooperation agreement in Addis Ababa in September 2000, during the visit of the Executive Director of WFP to Ethiopia. The WFP programme of cooperation with OAU covers the following areas: humanitarian affairs; food security and agriculture; education, health and nutrition; women in development; and early warning for disaster mitigation.

60. The OAU Coordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection to Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons held its twenty-sixth session from 17 to 21 May 2001 in Addis Ababa. WFP was officially admitted as a member and was elected to the post of Vice-Chair. The Chairmanship of the Committee is held by UNHCR. After discussing extensively on OAU collaboration with agencies involved in protection and assistance to refugees, the Committee prepared its programme of activities for 2001. The most important aspect of the meeting was the field trip jointly organized by OAU, UNHCR and WFP to the Somali refugee camps in eastern Ethiopia.

61. Between June and October, about 28,000 Somali refugees were repatriated to north-west Somalia, and two of the eight refugee camps have since been closed. UNHCR and WFP provided packages of food, household utensils and cash to facilitate the re-integration of the repatriating refugees.

62. In July 2000, at the thirty-sixth OAU Summit, held in Lomé, African Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their intention to form an African political and economic union and set an ambitious time frame for its creation. As a follow-up to that decision, the then Chairman of OAU called upon FAO to provide assistance in identifying the practical steps necessary to develop a common market for food and agriculture in Africa.

63. FAO accordingly prepared, in cooperation with OAU, a draft paper on African economic integration and food security, which was subsequently endorsed by the First Extraordinary Conference of African Ministers of Agriculture, which was held in Lomé on 20 and 21 April 2001, with technical and organizational support from FAO. This laid the foundation for a decision by the thirty-seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, held in Lusaka, to authorize the establishment of an African common market for staple foods. The Heads of State also requested the Secretary-General of the OAU to take urgent action on the preparation of a comprehensive programme, including a definite timetable for the establishment of the common market. Finally they requested FAO to provide technical assistance to the OAU General Secretariat, its member States and the regional economic communities in the implementation of strategies and programmes aimed at improving food security in Africa.

64. OAU and FAO began consultations immediately on the implementation of these Summit decisions, including the preparation of a FAO-funded project in support of developing the proposed common market.

VIII. World Health Organization

65. Since the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) makes the regional economic communities building blocks of the pan-African community, the World Health Organization (WHO), during the period from October 2000 to July 2001, has focused its support to OAU in the preparation of draft cooperation agreements between WHO and the different regional economic communities (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), ECOWAS, SADC).

66. At this particular period, these draft cooperation agreements are under review and should be finalized for signature by the two parties as soon as possible. WHO is working closely with the communities for the promotion of cooperation in health and its integration at regional and continental levels.

67. WHO provided financial and scientific supports to OAU in the preparation and organization of the African Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases. The Summit was followed by the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS. Since then, WHO has been working closely with OAU in the preparation of workshops with the different regional economic communities to step up efforts to effectively implement the Plan of Action that was adopted.

68. At the legislative level, in July 2001, the Heads of State and Government adopted the Declaration of the Period 2001-2010 as the OAU Decade for African Traditional Medicine (AHG/Dec. 164 (XXXVII)); the decision on the African Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases (AHG/Dec. 161 (XXXVII)); and the decision on the Implementation of the Plan of Action for the Eradication of Tsetse Flies in Africa (AHG/Dec. 169 XXXVII)) (see A/56/457, annex I). WHO was requested to provide technical, financial and material support and assistance to member States.

69. The African Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases appealed to WHO to provide necessary financial support to member States in the implementation of the Plan of Action, either individually or through the Global Fund for the Control of HIV/AIDS. WHO was also requested to follow up on the implementation of the Abuja Plan of Action and to report annually to OAU. WHO was further requested to assist OAU to put in place a small unit, which will service the mechanism on a daily basis.

70. With regard to the Declaration of the Period 2001-2010 as the OAU Decade for African Traditional Medicine proposed to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government at the thirty-seventh Ordinary Session, WHO commended and supported the Ugandan initiative, which is in line with the WHO policy on the subject of promoting the role of traditional medicine in health systems. WHO gave the necessary technical support in the development of the Plan of Action adopted by the Summit.

71. In partnership with OAU, WHO undertook an advocacy programme for the African initiative for malaria control and Roll-Back Malaria. The first African malaria date was celebrated in April 2001 in Abuja (Nigeria). In addition, the OAU secretariat has requested WHO for technical assistance for the convening of an African expert meeting on "Tobacco or health", as a necessary step towards Africa's full participation in the signing and ratification of the Convention on Tobacco Control. The necessary arrangements are being made to support this request.

IX. International Organization for Migration

72. During the period from October 2000 to July 2001, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has focused its support to OAU on: fostering regional migration dialogue with the regional economic communities; developing programmes to encourage and facilitate the participation of the African diaspora; advocating public health aspects of migration, particularly migration and HIV/AIDS; and sensitizing member States on the problem of trafficking of children and women in Africa.

73. In order to strengthen intraregional and interregional cooperation on migration-related issues in the context of regional integration, two meetings were organized during the period. In October 2000, a Regional Ministerial Conference on the theme "Participation of migrants in the development of their country of origin" was convened in Dakar with

delegates from 13 ECOWAS countries. In November 2000, a similar regional migration dialogue was initiated in Mbabane, with representatives from the 14 SADC countries, followed by a meeting in May 2001 in Zambia. The member States adopted several recommendations towards building a common approach to migration in the ECOWAS and SADC countries. Accordingly, IOM is working with member States in developing the following initiatives: protection of migrant rights; building capacity in the formulation and implementation of migration policies; management of borders and intragovernmental cooperation; and collaboration on exchange of migration data.

74. In accordance with the recommendation that OAU and IOM draw up joint programmes to return highly qualified African nationals to Africa adopted at the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission meeting held in Algiers in April 2000, a conceptual framework for a programme entitled "Migration for development in Africa" was developed and presented to 21 African countries in Libreville, in April 2001. The programme is aimed at transfer of technology, investments and job creation. Currently, IOM is working closely with interested member States to develop country-specific strategies and to raise the necessary funds required. Joint efforts are ongoing to familiarize the member States with the programme to ensure their support and endorsement.

75. IOM assigned its HIV/AIDS Technical Adviser to work with the OAU task force in the preparation and organization of the African Summit, including the drafting of the Abuja Framework for Action for the fight against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases in Africa. In accordance with the commitments articulated in the Abuja Framework, IOM is working closely with some of the OAU member States to step up their efforts for the inclusion of migrant mobile population in HIV/AIDS national and regional plans. In several countries, cross-border and inter-country strategies are being studied. To this end, IOM, in partnership with OAU member States, shall play a key role in the follow-up and implementation of an Africa-wide cross-border regional strategy on HIV/AIDS.

76. In collaboration with UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO), IOM made substantive contributions to the report of the Secretary-General of OAU on trafficking of children and women in Africa presented at the twenty-fourth Ordinary Session of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission, held in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, in April 2001. Delegations agreed that the issue of trafficking had become a matter of serious concern to Africa, essentially because of its increasing magnitude and complexity. The premium that Africa should place on the rights, future and protection of children was also stressed. The issue was further deliberated during the Pan-African Forum on Children convened in Cairo in 2001. At their seventy-fourth Ordinary Session held in Lusaka in July 2001, the Council of Ministers of OAU called upon member States to consider the issue of trafficking in children and women as an abuse of human rights and to enact and implement national legislation against trafficking in women and children in Africa. Accordingly, IOM, in collaboration with UNICEF, ILO and WHO, has stepped up its counter-trafficking efforts in West and East Africa. Joint efforts to mobilize resources at national and regional level are under way. In addition, IOM is exploring how best to provide technical support to the Ministerial Conference on trafficking to be convened in Burkina Faso in April 2002.

77. IOM joined the already existing joint OAU/ECA/African Development Bank (ADB)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) task force to facilitate the preparation of the Fourth General Assembly of the African Population Commission, to be held in Tunisia in September 2001, on the theme "Mobilizing political commitment for national actions to address HIV/AIDS, youth and migration". The purpose of the meeting is to mobilize political commitment to develop population policies for national action and to design intraregional and interregional strategy on HIV/AIDS, youth and migration. In this regard, IOM will be presenting the main paper on contemporary migration in Africa and will also finance a supplementary case study paper on free movement of persons for sustainable development in Africa: the case of the ECOWAS region.

78. At the seventy-fourth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held Lusaka in July 2000, the Government of Senegal, with the support of the General Secretariat of OAU and IOM, proposed the establishment of a framework for a policy of migration in Africa. Accordingly, the Council adopted decision CM/Dec. 614 LXXIV, in which it called upon member States, among other things, to ensure the integration of

migration into their national and regional agenda for security, stability, development and cooperation; recommends that member States work towards free movement of people, and to strengthen intraregional and interregional cooperation in matters concerning migration; and calls upon IOM to encourage and facilitate the return of their qualified nationals and promote the initiated programme of Migration for Development of Africa (see A/56/457, annex II).

X. Economic Commission for Africa

A. Environment

79. At least three meetings have been held at which ECA, together with OAU and other donor agencies, such as the World Bank, FAO, the Pesticide Action Network-UK, the World Wildlife Fund-US (WWF-US) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) discussed the establishment of the African stockpile project to dispose of obsolete stockpile of toxic pesticides from Africa and prevent future accumulation. The project is estimated to cost US$ 250 million and funds are being sought from donors, including the World Bank, the Global Environment Fund and the African Development Bank.

80. FAO, the Pesticide Action Network-UK and World Wildlife Fund-US have been the leading institutions in galvanizing world support for the disposal of obsolete stockpiles from Africa. The above-mentioned meetings have resulted in the submission of a concept note, which has been approved by the Global Environment Fund for initial funding to prepare the full project proposal. Processes are being put in place by OAU and ECA to sensitize African countries to the negative health impact of the stockpiles and organize political support for the project.

81. ECA also leads the Africa regional process of preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg, in 2002. The process is expected to result in an African Common Position for the Summit. The topics to be included in the Position are: eradicating poverty; trade and environment; promoting peace and governance; promoting synergy between multilateral agreements; incorporating land degradation and desertification issues; infrastructure and health and financing for development — including debt issues.

82. Jointly sponsored by ECA, UNEP, OAU and ADB, the preparatory process began in January 2000, with the holding in Addis Ababa of the first High-Level Stake Holders Meeting on Sustainable Development. The Meeting decided on a series of consultations and follow-up meetings, and established an Expanded Joint Secretariat, entrusted with the responsibility of organizing the overall preparatory process in the region. The core members of the Expanded Joint Secretariat are ECA, UNEP, OAU and ADB. Other members include the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), ECCAS, ECOWAS and SADC. Later, UNDP Capacity 21 (for Africa) was co-opted as a member and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is expected to take part in the meetings and activities of the Expanded Joint Secretariat. On this particular area of cooperation, the lead agency is UNEP, closely assisted by ECA, OAU and ADB. The impact of the activities is strengthened institutional mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the recommendations of the Summit.

83. The First Meeting of the Expanded Joint Secretariat was held in Abidjan, in June 2000. The Second Meeting was held in Dakar in March 2001, and reaffirmed that Africa's preparation would be carried out at national, subregional and regional levels. The subregional consultations were planned as follows: from 28 to 31 May, SADC; from 11 to 14 June, AMU; from 25 to 28 June, ECOWAS/Inter-States Committee on Drought in the Sahel (CILSS); from 1 to 3 July, ECCAS; and from 16 to 19 July, COMESA/IGAD. A regional conference will be held in Addis Ababa later this year to discuss Africa's Common Position.

84. As at June 2001, US$ 800,000 had been secured from external sources for the process. UNDP Capacity 21 (for Africa) is contributing US$ 920,000 to meet the cost of undertaking national assessment in at least 25 African countries and to support the preparatory processes. A financial gap of $130,000 has been estimated. UNEP and other members of the Expanded Joint Secretariat are pursuing a fund-raising effort to close this gap.

85. The second and third Inter-Agency Meetings with OAU, UNEP and the World Conservation Union were held to revise the 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention). The leading institutions for this review are UNEP, the World Conservation Union and OAU.

This convention has been reviewed to make it relevant to the current environmental challenges in Africa.

B. Population

86. In June 2000, ECA, ADB, OAU and UNFPA held the second meeting of the Working Group for the follow-up to the implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. ECA plans to lead the partners in the fourth meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the two frameworks in November 2001, for which it is the lead agency in the Africa region, closely assisted by UNFPA, OAU and ADB. These activities have had the following impact: (a) enhanced implementation of the recommendations of the two frameworks, (b) strengthening of institutional mechanisms and (c) sharing of experiences.

87. Other areas of cooperation with the OAU include ad hoc consultations and participation of the Commission in meetings of the African Population Commission. OAU has a programme on population policy, which is supported by UNFPA. The programme is aimed at developing a framework for the development of appropriate strategies for strengthening the implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of population policies in Africa, and strengthening the institutional capacity of OAU and the African Population Commission to enhance the implementation of the Dakar Ngor Declaration and ICPD-PA through information, education and communication and advocacy interventions. ECA works closely with OAU on such matters. On the OAU Population Policy Programme and the African Population Commission, OAU is the lead agency, closely assisted by ECA and ADB with strategies for coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of population policies in the region, as well as sharing experiences.

C. Gender issues

88. In line with the Dakar Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action, and other plans of action for accelerating the empowerment of women, as expressed in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, it was decided at the United Nations/OAU cooperation meeting of April 2000, and reflected in a subsequent plan of action prepared by the Gender and Development Task Force, that gender and development cooperation would entail the following areas:

(a) ECA, in collaboration with UNICEF, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNDP, UNFPA and the Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, would assist OAU in developing a training framework and instruments in the area of gender for OAU staff, African ambassadors based in Addis Ababa and regional economic commissions;

(b) ECA, UNDP, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNFPA and the Division for the Advancement of Women would work with OAU in defining the modus operandi for greater presence and involvement of women in decision-making at all levels. ECA, UNDP, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women would assist OAU in mainstreaming gender into the formulation of the new programmes of reform and renewal of the organization;

(c) A task force is to be established, composed of OAU, ECA, UNDP, UNHCR and the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, charged with assisting the African Women Committee on Peace and Development in resource mobilization, establishment of a secretariat and support structures, and support for the implementation of the programmes of the Committee.

89. In response to the above, a Gender and Development Task Force, comprising members from OAU, ECA, UNDP, UNHCR and the Department of Political Affairs, was established, and met in May 2001. It agreed on the following:

(a) OAU and ECA should undertake a joint assessment of the present status and functionality of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development;

(b) A task force should be established to assist the Committee in resource mobilization, establishment of its secretariat and support structures;

(c) A methodology would be developed for drafting a gender policy and institutional framework for implementation for OAU; and the ECA African

Centre for Women will fund a consultant to assist OAU to draft it.

90. Activities agreed upon during Gender and Development Task Force meetings, as well as the drafting of an OAU gender policy and its implementation, will also be developed within the framework of the African Union. In particular, the draft OAU gender policy will also take into account policies developed by other agencies, such as AfDB.

D. Regional cooperation and integration

91. During the period under review, ECA and OAU worked closely to enhance the implementation of the Abuja Treaty, which established AEC. A number of activities were carried out in this regard. First, the execution by ECA of project RAF/94/008, entitled "Promotion of Africa's economic integration through the establishment of the African Economic Community", funded by UNDP, continued. The Steering Committee for the project held its second meeting in July 2000 and, on that occasion, made some decisions on the re-orientation or reformulation of some of the outputs with a view to adjusting to changing context and priorities. In particular, the ongoing restructuring of the OAU secretariat made it compulsory to revisit the training component of the project, in order to anticipate the evolving needs.

92. Second, during the same period AEC organized two meetings of its Coordination Committee, which is composed of the Chief Executives of OAU, ECA, ADB and the regional economic communities. These two meetings put in place the legal framework for the operation of the Committee and defined broadly the main course of action in relation to the accelerated implementation of the Abuja Treaty.

93. However, the advent of the African Union and its attendant implications made it necessary for ECA and OAU to agree on the need to re-assess the priorities of their mutual cooperation. In this regard, the two partners held informal consultations on the transition from OAU/AEC to the African Union and agreed that the structure of the executive organs of the African Union would determine the type of collaboration that would make the new organization operational. In particular, the support ECA had pledged to provide to the reform and renewal efforts of OAU had to be put on hold until the staffing requirements and other operational aspects of the African Union are clearly defined. This would also entail the replacement of the AEC Coordination Committee by a new consultative organ in which the African Union and its partners would continue their policy dialogue on regional integration in Africa.

94. Finally, OAU and ECA agreed to revitalize the Panel of Advisers which, in 1999, assisted African countries in international negotiation. The Panel will now focus on the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization and the regional agreements to be negotiated between the European Union and African economic groupings.

XI. United Nations Development Programme

95. It should be recalled that, since the signing of the first cooperation agreement in 1975, UNDP and OAU have cooperated in the implementation of five successive regional programmes. This has enabled them to address a variety of critical and important issues, including regional integration, institutional capacity-building, human resources development, trade and gender, peace and conflict prevention, management and resolution.

96. At present, cooperation between UNDP and OAU revolves around the following two major areas of priority: (a) economic cooperation and regional integration; and (b) support to the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

A. Programme for the promotion of Africa's economic cooperation and integration through the establishment of the African Economic Community (RAF/94/008)

97. This project, which became operational in October 1996, aims at contributing to the smooth launching of the operation of AEC through the strengthening of OAU as its secretariat, the strengthening and harmonization of the regional economic communities, the completion of protocols and the implementation of all aspects of the first stage of the Treaty establishing AEC and also the

rationalization of ECA-sponsored institutions and other subregional organizations.

98. The implementation of the Programme, which was slowed during 2000 because of the institutional restructuring of OAU, has picked up again in 2001, with the decision to establish the African Union. A CD-ROM and other promotional and sensitization materials on OAU/AEC were produced and widely distributed among the business community, non-governmental organizations, political leaders and other segments of the African society. Training activities and capacity-building efforts have been undertaken in line with the reform process being implemented by the OAU. Studies on remuneration issues, purchase and delivery of computer training equipment as well as other support activities to the East African Cooperation and to trade negotiations were also implemented.

99. Recently, UNDP and OAU have undertaken to review their cooperation in order to establish a more comprehensive framework for cooperation which takes into account such developments as (a) the creation of the African Union by the Constitutive Act adopted in Lomé in July 2001; (b) the Declaration on the new Common Initiative by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Lusaka in July 2001 approving the New African Initiative; and (c) the formulation of the Second Regional Cooperation Framework of UNDP/Regional Bureau for Africa for the period 2002-2006.

B. Capacity-building for the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RAF/97/028)

100. As the title suggests, the RAF/97/028 project aims at building the capacity of the OAU to effectively operationalize its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa. The project was signed in July 1997 and entered into its active implementation stage around the third quarter of 1998. The initial project amount of US$ 3 million has been almost fully obligated and the initial amount has since been supplemented by US$ 700,000, upon a recommendation in January 2001 of the tripartite Project Steering Committee.

101. The implementation of the project focused on three main areas of outreach activities of the African civil society sector to enhance their linkage with the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The three areas of focus are: information systems support; strengthening of human resources; and resource mobilization for the OAU Peace Fund which constitutes the main source of financing for the OAU operations in preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa.

Information support system

102. Under the Information Systems Support, the project funded the establishment of a Local Area Network at OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa. This facility, which became operational in 2000, is now largely used by OAU staff and officials for transfer of information generated within and between the institution's departments. Dissemination of policy documents from the OAU Central Organ, Council of Ministers and Heads of States Summits have been greatly facilitated through the use of this facility.

103. Efforts are currently ongoing for the acquisition of telephone lines from the Ethiopian Telecommunications Authorities and the procurement of computer equipment for connectivity of the OAU local area network with all members of the Central Organ (African embassies) in Addis Ababa. This is expected to be operational within the next two months.

Human resources enhancement

104. In the area of strengthening the Human Resources Capacity of the Conflict Management Centre of OAU, the project has recruited four information analysts and two research assistants for purposes of collecting of relevant data and analysing of information for the OAU early warning system. Furthermore, efforts have been made to establish an early warning module which would contain relevant updated information of potential and ongoing conflicts in Africa, as well as the criteria for, and methodology to be used in predicating conflict situations. When established, the module will serve as a scientific tool for measuring and forecasting conflicts in Africa.

Resource mobilization

105. With regard to the resource mobilization activities, the project has recruited a resource mobilization expert who has worked with the Conflict Management Centre to produce a document on various

strategies for mobilizing resources for the OAU Peace Fund. In addition to this strategy document, a three-year programme and plan of action has been drawn up embodying activities expected to be undertaken by OAU in the area of conflict resolution in Africa. Efforts are ongoing to hold a round-table meeting of potential donors before the end of 2001. This will aim at the pledging of funds for financing the Peace Fund and the three-year programme.

Outreach

106. Another important area of focus is "outreach" to the African civil society for the purpose of linking them to the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and for general advocacy of peace in Africa. In this regard, the project has co-sponsored and jointly financed the organization of a continent-wide civil society conference which was held in 2001 in Addis Ababa. Furthermore, the project funded the establishment of the headquarters of the OAU Youth Clubs in Ouagadougou and also funded executive and plenary meetings of the clubs in Addis Ababa and Abidjan. Project activities have also been extended to funding an international executive committee meeting, as well as publications of the OAU-sponsored African Women's Committee for Peace and Development. Efforts are ongoing for convening a meeting in Addis Ababa, before the end of this year, of executives of apex women's organizations in Africa.

107. The RAF/97/028 project is expected to be completed by the end of 2001. For purposes of continuity of some of the activities that have been undertaken and, in order to achieve the desired overall impact of the project, OAU has indicated the need for a second phase of the project to follow immediately. It is expected that a formal proposal will be made by OAU in the near future and that an appraisal mission will be sent as soon as possible by UNDP.

Other recent initiatives

108. In October 2001, UNDP fielded a mission to OAU for the purpose of formulating a new memorandum of understanding to serve as an addendum to their initial cooperation agreement. The objective is to establish a framework for systematic cooperation between UNDP and OAU that would facilitate the effective planning towards the operationalization of the African Union and would strengthen the implementation of selected initiatives, particularly the African Union and New African Initiatives. This will enable both institutions to cooperate in the planning and preparation for the transition from OAU to AU, and the development of strategic plans for recent key initiatives, particularly the New African Initiative. It will also address the achievement of key shared objectives in the following areas: democratic and participatory governance; making globalization work for Africa; conflict prevention; peace-building and disaster management; and reducing the threat and impact of HIV/AIDS on Africa.

XII. Observation

109. The programme of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity is one of the most extensive formal arrangements concluded between the United Nations and any other regional organization in the world. Not only has a tradition of regular consultation with OAU on issues of peace and security affecting the African continent developed (the United Nations now hardly takes an initiative on Africa without consulting OAU or any of the subregional organizations), but many of the United Nations agencies and programmes have developed extensive bilateral programmes with OAU in their various areas of work. The programme of action that was agreed upon at the April 2000 meeting between the two organizations has provided a valuable framework for the United Nations and OAU to work together to address a wide range of issues and problems that affect the African region.

110. The report presented above shows that the programme of cooperation between the two organizations has grown, not only in scope but, more importantly, also in depth. A tradition has evolved for the United Nations agencies to involve their OAU counterparts in many of their programme activities in the region. For its part, OAU has also increasingly relied on the scope of presence and resources available within the United Nations system to expand its engagement with the people of the region. Such engagement has expanded beyond the scope of politics and security to include collaboration on issues such as humanitarian affairs, economic development, health, education, agriculture, food production and migration.

111. The present phase of the programme of cooperation between the two organizations has become critical. The dismantling of OAU as it is presently structured and the establishment of a new organization within the framework of the African Union would require the re-evaluation and possibly reformulation of many of the existing cooperation arrangements between the two organizations. It is expected that this process would be conducted within the following year, after OAU, under the leadership of its new Secretary-General, has developed a set of proposals for the consideration of the political leadership regarding the policies and the structure of the new African Union.

112. There is no doubt, however, of the increasing importance of the African economic communities in the new arrangements that are being developed for the political, economic and social integration of the region. Not only are these communities highlighted as the essential pillars of African integration in the Abuja Treaty, they are also described in the Constitutive Act as the building blocks with which the African Union shall be constructed. The deepening of United Nations/OAU cooperation to include the design of programmes that are subregionally based is thus a move in the right direction.

113. Another important dimension that should feature more prominently in the formulation of a new programme of cooperation is the role of civil society. With the establishment of the African Parliament and the increasing role of African civil society in all aspects of life, the United Nations and its agencies, as well as the OAU/African Union will need to give deliberate focus and enhanced profile to civil society in the next phase of their programme of cooperation.